

Benjamin Günther

The cultural aspects of MINT recruitment

How to overcome the skills shortage
by understanding graduates' needs



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List of Abbreviations

DIW.....	Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
H.....	Hypostudy
HR.....	Human Resources
IAB.....	Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung
ICR.....	Institute for Competitive Recruiting
ICT.....	Information and Communication Technology
IDV.....	Individualism Index
IfW.....	Institut für Weltwirtschaft
IVR.....	Indulgence versus Restraint Index
IW.....	Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft
KPI.....	Key Performance Indicator
LTO.....	Long- Term Orientation
MAS.....	Masculinity Index
MINT.....	Mathematics, Informatics, Natural and Technical Sciences
PDI.....	Power Distance Index
RQ.....	Research Question
R&D.....	Research and Development
SMEs.....	Small and Medium- sized Enterprises
UAI.....	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
USP.....	Unique Selling Proposition
VDI.....	Verband Deutscher Ingenieure
vs.....	Versus

1. Introduction

In the current public debate about the labor market in Germany, the skills shortage as a consequence of the demographic change is a term used in an inflationary amount. This becomes apparent from the fact that a Google request of the term skills shortage generates about 15,900,000 hits. However, by observing this debate more consciously and scanning the relevant economics literature, one realizes that there seems to be no generally accepted definition for the term skills shortage. Some economists and politicians hold the view that the skills shortage is already a present problem, others say that it is an issue of the future. As there is no consensus about a definition, it is nothing but logical that there cannot be any consensus about the existence or non-existence and the temporal horizon of the problem. In this study, the author will try to find at least an approach to bring some order into this quite chaotic debate, so that also a layman can understand it. Another prevalent statement is that the skills shortage affects worst MINT qualifications, i.e. staff employed in the sector of mathematics, informatics, natural sciences and technology. As the initial point for the further examination, the study will check the validity of this statement.

If it should prove true, a nearby question would be how employers can compete best for the shortening resource of MINT workforce, i.e. how they can adjust their recruitment to attract MINT graduates. The staff's knowledge and skills will likely be the most important entrepreneurial "resource" throughout the next decades, or citing the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, it will be "the ultimate competition edge for (...) organizations and (...) a key in their success" (Amirkhani, Tajmirriahi, Mohammadi & Dalir, 2012, para. 1). Consequently, it has a high significance for companies to develop long- term strategies to cope with an eventually existing or upcoming skills shortage. However, to know which application incentives they have to provide, employers must know what the graduates want. Thus, scarce entrepreneurial resources can be allocated as efficiently as possible in the scope of MINT recruitment. Although a lot of research was already undertaken by management consultants on this topic, nobody had the idea to dig a bit deeper into the programming of MINT graduates' mind by also examining the occupational microculture which underlies the preferences of the target group. This study is likely the first approach which examines graduates' preferences from the cultural point of view based upon Geert Hofstede's dimensional model. For that purpose, the author conducted a non- representative survey among